
Court Appointed Special Advocate Newsletter

Superior Court of Arizona ♥ Maricopa County Juvenile Division
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A CHILD'S VOICE IN COURT

KIDS GET "STRESSED OUT" TOO!

Like a pebble thrown in a pond, childhood stress can have a ripple effect, but stress' ripples can harm your child's health as he or she gets older.

Consider a few of the things that kids commonly face today; divorce, family financial problems, peer pressure at school, and neighborhood violence. These and other issues can frighten and overwhelm even adults, but for children the impact can be even greater.

And for African-American children, stress begins early. Whether an African-American child lives in a ghetto or a mansion, the almost constant presence of racism is harmful to his or her health. In order to deal with it, many African- American children turn the stress inward, into a silent anger or self-hatred.

Neighborhood violence is one of the major causes of stress in children. Your child may be the best kid in the world filled with confidence, strength and goodwill. They may use good judgment, work hard in school and avoid trouble after school--and their friends may, too--but if they have witnessed violence first hand, been victims of violence or perhaps been approached by a gang or other violent peer group, they are under a great deal of pressure.

For a child, stress related anxiety or anger may show up in a host of ways, including behavioral health problems. Kids who are under severe stress may be unable to sleep at night. They may worry excessively about the future, about past behavior, about competence in sports or academics or about popularity in school. Living with constant anxiety or suppressed anger also may affect a child's eating habits and increase his/her risk of developing chronic health problems such as hypertension.

Always find time to let your child know how smart he/she is, how good looking, how funny, how accomplished. No child ever gets too much of this kind of parental approval. Remember, a strong self-image is like a mirror that can't be broken.

The best thing that parents can do for children is to embrace a positive spirit themselves. Make it a habit to speak in a positive way to your children. Remember that ordinary daily hassles can cause even more stress than major life crises and that children feel their parents' stress as well as their own. Here are a few important guidelines to follow with your child:

- *Go to the source.* Help your child identify the source of the stress. Knowing where stress is coming from can help.
- *Wrestle with racism.* If the trigger is racism, acknowledge it. Then respond productively instead of focusing on racial put-downs. Explain to your child that racists are ignorant people who need to make themselves feel superior by putting someone else down.
- *Accentuate the positive.* Encourage your child to turn positive thinking into positive action. Always reaffirm your child's positive actions by reminding him or her of all the productive things being done and why they're being done.
- *Learn to listen.* Let your child talk to you. Ask your child what's going on in school.
- *Take the pressure off.* Look for specific, small ways to reduce the pressure in your child's life by replacing it with fun. *Stress*"Singing around the house can have a good and contagious effect. Tell jokes--laughter is the best stress medicine in the

world

Continue on page 2

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■ 2 October 1998

Continued from page 2

- *Let your child help out.* Give your child responsibilities around the house. Performing tasks makes children feel useful, and the satisfaction they feel when they do a job well actually can reduce their stress load.
- *Give your young one guidance.* Help your child learn to recognize personal quirks that may create stress. Is the child overly sensitive to criticism? Does the child panic if someone doesn't like him/her? If so, why?
- *Keep your child healthy.* Tackle any health-related stress that may be part of your child's life. For example, if you suspect that your child is smoking, drinking or using drugs, deal with it right then and there.
- *Let your child heal by helping.* Encourage your child to get involved in church activities. Help the child find ways to help others. Being a good friend and neighbor is a fine way for a child to refocus worries.
- *Know when to get help.* When stress builds up in young children, the effects may not show up for several years. Children who suffer cumulative stressful experiences may display a delayed reaction called post traumatic stress disorder or PTSD. Two groups particularly at risk are children who repeatedly are exposed to violence and children who have been abused. Symptoms, when they do appear, include panic attacks, recurring nightmares, depression and feelings of powerlessness. The most commonly reported symptom is having nightmares about neighborhood violence. PTSD is relatively uncommon, but African-American children are more than twice as likely as white children to suffer from it.

As you can see, there are a lot of different things you can do to help reduce your child's stress level. These suggestions may even help to damper your own stress level. Seeing your child feel better about themselves can put your mind at ease and create a happy, healthy environment for the whole family.

For more information about Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, please call the MIKID Office at 1-800-35-MIKID. *Reprint from MIKID Newsletter 1998, Vol X, Issue 1, which was itself a reprint from N.Y. Times, Nov. 13, 1997.*

COMMENDATIONS

FCRB commends CASA **Rose Ruth** and the adoption's case manager for their efforts on the case in working toward permanency for the children. Great job Rose!

FCRB commends CASA **Leslie Jones** and the GAL for

Court Appointed Special Advocate Newsletter

working cooperatively and diligently on their case. Keep it up Leslie. You are appreciated!

CASA **Linda Warfield** has been a tremendous influence in the lives of the family, and the mother speaks very highly of her support. The case manager commends her for her dedication and commitment to the family's success -- "Linda has made tremendous efforts to oversee and facilitate communications amongst all involved". GREAT JOB LINDA. Thanks for all your work!

CASA **Shelly Stern** is the CASA to three teens and has worked with them for over 3.5 years. Despite the tribulations, Shelly has been consistently available to serve the case. Thanks for your dedication Shelly!

CPS Case manager, Michelle Hutchinson, and the CASA Program would like to recognize CASA **Myndi Eakin** for her outstanding work on her case. Michelle called to say that Myndi is "of great assistance, goes out of her way to get things done and has done a great job on her case". Michelle recommends that Myndi "take another case" so she will benefit another child.

FCRB commends CASA **Bonnie Weppner-Kahn** for her outstanding efforts. She has been a strong advocate in her case. Way to go Bonnie!

CASA **Kathy Mucerino** was recognized for her "thorough knowledge of the case. Great job Kathy!

FCRB commends CASA **Mary Schmidt** for her excellent report. Way to go Mary!

FCRB commends CASA **Karen Tyrrell** for her effort and advocacy on the part of the children! FCRB also states "CASA **Karen Tyrrell**, has in this case been tireless and deserves a big commendation"! Thanks for all you do Karen!

While we don't have quarterly awards for outstanding volunteers, we do like to recognize those volunteers who go above and beyond the call of duty. We know that many of you are doing the same work and we thank you too!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY VOLUNTEERS!!!

Stacy Schink	1	Joyce Gatson	23
Jill Lindstrom	2	Paula Krasselt	26
Angela Ashley	4	Shelly Stern	27
Brian Davis	7	Mark Salem	28
Lori Kirk	14	Judy Peirce	29
Evelyn Hughes	15	Nicole Olsen	30
D'Anna Little	19	Gloria Gray	31
Adam Mendoza	21		

Enjoy your day! You all deserve it!

■ 3 October 1998

ASA SPONSORED TRAINING

October 3, 1998, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., Arizona Early Intervention Program (AZEIP) - A brief overview of the Arizona Early Intervention Program and the children they serve. The training will describe some key learning for children at certain ages, what you might see a child doing, and how you may guide a child's growth and learning. Location: Juvenile Court Durango, 3125 W. Durango, Room 223. Please RSVP to the CASA Office by 10-1-98.

October 21, 1998, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., East Valley Peer Group Meeting - All CASAs are encouraged to attend. Peer Groups allow CASAs the opportunity to share resources, ask questions, and meet other volunteers. Presenters: Mentor Volunteers and CASA Program Staff. Location: 64 E. 1st Street, Mesa. Please RSVP to the CASA office by 10-16-98.

SATELLITE TRAINING

October 8, 1998, 1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., Court Improvement & How it Affects You - This satellite session will focus on the following: Court Improvement Implications for Arizona, Overview of Adoptions & Safe Families Act, Implications of HB2645, Changes in Rules of Procedure for Juvenile Court, and What is Happening in my Area. For broadcast sites and more information please contact Theresa Saiz at 542-9792 or Bettie Zebrowski at 542-9582. *Registration deadline is Wednesday October 1.

October 30, 1998, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. PST, Upcoming Integrating the Professionals in Child Maltreatment Cases - This training is not going to be offered by the State CASA Office as there are no rooms available. However, there will be a video tape available for your viewing pleasure. This will be available in the CASA Office by December.

CONFERENCES

October 29 and 30, Girl Power: Building Bright Futures - Conference will highlight Arizona programs centered on self-esteem and healthy lifestyles for young girls. For more information, contact Christine Nelson, State HMHB office at (602)266-0064.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LETS GO TO THE THEATER!

Phoenix Theater's Children's Theater, The Cookie Company, is making available to our CASA children ten seats for each performance of this year's season. Two-weeks advance notice is required and availability is on a first-come-first-serve basis. If you are interested in any of

Court Appointed Special Advocate Newsletter

the performances, please call the Phoenix Theater box office at 254-5121. Tickets will be released for sale 15 minutes prior to curtain if they are not picked up.

VOLUNTEERS AND OVERNIGHT VISITS

Periodically there has been confusion expressed regarding the practice of CASA children having overnight visits with their CASA volunteer. Please recall that, per policy, an overnight stay requires prior approval of the CASA coordinator, the CPS case manager, and "a court order." Policy further states that, "if for any reason the CASA child needs to stay at the volunteer's home for more than one night, it must be court ordered with all parties in agreement."

National policy does not approve of overnight visits. Specifically, National CASA's position is that overnight visits are beyond the parameters of the role of the volunteer and should not be allowed. The Maricopa County CASA program honors the National policy and strongly discourages overnight visits.

Below are some reasons why overnight visits are not good practice. Should you have questions, comments and/or concerns, please contact your CASA coordinator.

DISADVANTAGES TO HAVING OVERNIGHT VISITS:

- Creates confusion in the minds of the child, the parents, and others involved in the case about the role of the volunteer.
- Can lead to over-involvement of the volunteer thus compromising the ability to assess all information objectively in order to make the most appropriate recommendation to the court.
- Creates the possibility that the child will experience another significant loss when the case is resolved and the volunteer is relieved of authority to be involved in the case.
- Can compromise the credibility of the CASA program with other professionals who may perceive that the volunteer is pursuing a goal in his/her personal interest, e.g. placement of the child on a permanent basis.
- Poses risk to the child that an inappropriate volunteer may do harm.
- Creates great potential risk of liability to the volunteer if the child experiences injury or makes an accusation of inappropriate sexual contact with the volunteer or a member of the family. Volunteer may have legal costs for defense even if the allegations are untrue.
- Poses risk of liability to the program for negligence in inadequate screening and supervision if the volunteer does harm to the child.

OCTOBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 AZ Early Intervention 10:00 - 12:00 Juvenile Court Durango, Rm 223. RSVP by 10-1
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 East Valley Peer Group Meeting 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 64 E. 1st St.; Mesa RSVP by 10-16	22	23	24
25 CASA Picnic; Margaret Hance Park, 67 W. Culver; 12-4:00 p.m. RSVP 506-4083	26	27	28	29	30	31

** It is very important that when a training is scheduled that you call to RSVP. If the training is canceled, this will insure that you are notified and this will also help us insure that we have enough food (if it is provided). RSVPing will also ensure that you are given credit towards your yearly training. Please help us help you.

■ 5 October 1998

Announcements continue from page 2

Maricopa County Model Court

Beginning January 2, 1999, the Juvenile Court will begin implementing changes in the management of dependency cases. Advocates throughout the state are excited and enthusiastic about these changes. CASAs are invited to be amongst the over 1200 professionals invited to attend this event. All CASAs are encouraged to participate by enrolling for one of the eight sessions offered.

Session	Date	Time
1A	11-3-98	8:30-12:00
1B	11-3-98	1:00-4:30
2A	11-6-98	8:30-12:00
2B	11-6-98	1:00-4:30
3A	11-9-98	8:30-12:00
3B	11-9-98	1:00-4:30
4A	11-18-98	8:30-12:00
4B	11-18-98	1:00-4:30

To register please call the CASA Office 506-4083 or E-mail us at CASA@smtpgw.maricopa.gov.

MOMMIE, UNCLE DAVID SAID...

By Jackie Flowers, CASA & FCRB Member

Recently, the following conversation was overheard in the Ladies' room of a restaurant: From one stall a little girl quizzically asked, "Mommy, Uncle David said we're going to get **HOT PLATES!!??**" "Yes, dear," said Mommy, from another stall, "but there will be food on the plates, as well". The child responded "Oh!" (so relaxed)...

Someone once said "Advocacy is acting out a belief that your vision can be brought to life." As CASAs, I believe as we advocate for children, our ultimate vision is for every child to have a parent or parent-like care giver who would reassure with a "Yes, dear, but -----." We passionately try to do this, as assigned Advocates with our CASA child/children. More emphasis on the need for a "forever family" for each "child in care" is possible if we address the important questions to our church members, our community residents, and our political candidates.

Our advocacy should envision timely and appropriate services to provide the Permanency that each child deserves. As CASAs, as citizens, and as family members let's talk the talk wherever possible.

Current information regarding children's issues is available by calling 266-0707 and requesting to be on the Fax, E-mail, or mailing network of Arizonans for Kids. AZ. for Kids was formed 2 years ago by CASAs and FCRB members and is now Children's Action Alliance's voice for abused,

Court Appointed Special Advocate Newsletter

neglected, and abandoned children. Arizona's children deserve our Advocacy!

"Who's for Kids", a new, hot-off-the-press brochure is available from Children's Action Alliance by calling 266-0707.

A recent quote from the "The Arizona Republic" by John Kolbe..."the most precious gift we can give any child is a sense of magic, not so much to see the world as it is -- but as it can be".

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY AND CONCILIATION COURTS

By CASA Bonnie Weppner-Kahn, M.Ed

The title of the National AFCC conference in Washington, DC was "Examining the Partnership Between Policy and Practice". Many of the seminars focused upon children's issues within the court that affect our CASA children. Sixteen countries were represented, which allowed contrast and comparison of children's rights in societies around the world. The themes most prominent throughout the sessions were those of child-focused policy and practice (as opposed to adult or system-centered issues), attention to the current and future developmental needs of the child, and involvement of children in decision-making when possible.

I attended a full-day forum on developmental stages and how abuse, neglect, and the quality of care-givers and environments at certain ages can affect a child for life. There is concern about stress that young children encounter, as new brain studies reveal physical changes with chronic stress. A child's brain development is affected in ways that can result in developmental delays and in learning disabilities, as we see so often in our older CASA children. Physical and emotional development can be negatively or positively affected, depending upon the attention given to meeting the developmental needs of the child at each stage of growth.

Shay Bilchik, Director of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, commended the National CASA Program for its dedication to focusing the courts and the provider system upon the children's needs. As children become older, it is important to allow them input into their situations. The CASA role is a vehicle for the child's wishes in the court and services. After three days of hearing judges, attorneys, and service providers, it was clear that we, as CASAs, are valuable in providing the hope and guiding the opportunities for abused and neglected children to overcome their early negative environments and have the chance to live fulfilling and positive lives.

CASA FALL PICNIC

Make plans now to attend the Annual CASA Fall Picnic at Margaret T. Hance Park, 67 W. Culver, on Sunday, October 25 from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. Bring your CASA children for an afternoon of fun and laughs as we play volleyball, run the three legged race, and eat hot dogs under cool October skies.

CASA will host the hot dogs and fixings. Volunteers are being asked to bring one of the following:

Coolers with drinks	Bags of Chips
Fruit	Veggies
Desserts	

It gets warm, so cold drinks are very much appreciated.

Call the CASA Office 506-4083 to sign up and please let us know how many children you will be bringing.

**CASA PROGRAM
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